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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 August 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 47-55

SUBJECT: Progress Report on NIE Survey and Proposals for Step Two

1. We have now received the answers to the written questionnaires which formed the first step of the survey of NIE use. These questionnaires, which were sent to all offices and agencies which received initial dissemination of NIE's from O/NE, were designed to elicit what use or onward dissemination these initial recipients made of the NIE's. Of the 284 copies of regular NIE's published, 180-250 odd are disseminated widely, directly to the NSC and staff, via the IAC agencies to a broad range of users in Washington and abroad, and via CIA to various foreign governments. Noteworthy is the large number which are sent abroad by the IAC agencies to US diplomatic missions, overseas commands, and attaches.

2. However, the above preliminary phase of the NIE survey carries us only through the stage of mechanical distribution. We now know where the NIE's are routed, but we do not yet know what use is made of them in the offices where received (or whether they are even read). This leads us to the second stage of the survey, that of determining by a series of brief interviews with a representative sample of the people or offices to which NIE's are routed, the actual use which is made of the NIE's.

3. We regard this interview stage as the real core of the survey. From the questionnaire replies received we have made up a proposed list of 36 interviews. (Attached as Tab "A"). This sample, in our view, is large enough to be comprehensive yet short enough to be within the capabilities of the 3-4 O/NE people who will have to conduct most interviews.

4. In many cases we propose to talk to the individuals who actually use NIE's. In the cases of NSC members themselves and other very senior

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officials, however, where arranging an interview will be difficult, we propose instead to talk to the heads of their immediate staffs or executive secretariats, who should be able to give us an adequate picture of the use of NIE's received. We also plan to confine the interviews to non-intelligence producing offices, as we already have from the questionnaires and prior experience a good idea of how NIE's are used by our IAC confreres.

5. To make sure that the interviews all cover the necessary ground and are all roughly comparable, we have prepared a proposed guide to be used by the various interviewers (attached as Tab "B"). While we propose that each O/NE interviewer conduct the interview as informally as he desires, we feel that all of them must have the same general goals in mind. We envisage a relatively brief interview of no more than 15-30 minutes at the outside.

6. We recommend that the interviews be conducted largely by the office of the Chief of the Estimates Staff, but that Board members conduct those few interviews where higher level contact would be desirable. In the special case of overseas users, we suggest contacting a sample of them by letter, unless the AD/NE is willing to authorize overseas travel for this purpose. A proposed letter is attached as Tab "C".

7. If these proposals meet with Board approval, we recommend that they be submitted to the IAC agencies, since it was agreed at the IAC meeting of 1 March when the survey was approved (IAC-M-186) that we would consult the agencies at each stage. Following their concurrence, we can begin the interviews.

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TAB "A"

PROPOSED LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

The following list is designed to provide a representative sample of end-users of NIE's. It attempts to be comprehensive but not so long as to impose an undue interview burden. It is restricted to planning and policy-making consumers. In each case where "office" is referred to, we propose to interview the secretariat rather than the official himself. Each agency list will be cleared with the appropriate IAC agency.

White House

Col. A. J. Goodpaster

NSC (2)

Executive Secretary

Deputy Executive Secretary

Department of State (8)

Director of Executive Secretariat (Sec., Under Sec., Deputy Undersec.)

Director, Policy Planning Staff

Office of Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs

Director, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs

Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs

Officer in Charge, Yugoslav Affairs

Officer, in Charge, North African Affairs

Officer in Charge, Indochina Affairs

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Department of Defense and JCS (6)

Office of Secretary of Defense

Office of Assistant Secretary (ISA)

NSC Planning Board member (Gen. Gerhart)

Defense Planning Board member (Gen. Bonesteel)

Executive Officer, Joint Strategic Plans Group

Office of Chairman of Joint Chiefs

Army (5)

Office of Secretary of the Army

Office of Chief of Staff

Special Assistant

Office of Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations)

G-3 Plans (Gen. Carraway)

Navy (5)

Office of Secretary of the Navy

Office of Chief of Naval Operations

Special Assistant on politico-military matters

Office of DCNO/Plans

Chief Planner

Air Force (5)

Office of Secretary of the Air Force

Special Assistant on politico-military matters

Office of Chief of Staff

Office of Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations

Office of Director of Plans

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OCB (2)

Director

Executive Secretary of one of the Planning Groups

AEC (2)

Office of Chairman, AEC

Director, Office of International Affairs

TOTAL: 36 interviews

Representative Sample of Overseas Users (to be contacted by letter)

Embassy Moscow

Embassy Taipei

HICOG, Bonn

J-2 and J-3, EUCOM

US Element, SHAPE

FECOM

CINCPAC

ADC

SAC

TOTAL: 9

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TAB "B"

PROPOSED INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. General. In accord with the concept that the survey is primarily a fact-finding exercise, the interviews should be designed to get a precise idea of how NIE's are actually used and what purpose they serve, and not to inquire directly about the user's opinions about their substantive quality.

a. Who should do the interviewing. We envisage having a small group of senior staff members from O/NE do the interviewing, except in a few high level instances when Board members might be more appropriate. If any IAC agencies so desire, they can have a representative present at interviews in their agencies, but in each case the O/NE interviewer should conduct it.

b. What should be asked. The theme of the interviews should be "how are NIE's used" not directly on "how good are they?" We know from the questionnaires which offices receive NIE's; we now want to determine what is done with them after they get there. To insure comparability each interviewer will keep within a general interview guide, as outlined below. It is not intended to serve as a rigid list but to make sure that all the major questions are covered and that all interviews cover roughly the same ground.

c. What NIE's should be covered. Aside from broad queries about NIE's in general it would be advisable to ask questions about some specific NIE's. Each interviewer should take along one or more recent NIE's which are pertinent to the interviewee's responsibilities.

d. What record should be kept. The interviewer can take notes if he chooses, but in any case should prepare a memo immediately after the interview. All such memos should be in a three-part form, covering: (1) the specific data obtained in response to the questions listed in the guide; (2) any additional information pertinent to the survey; and (3) any impressions which the interviewer thinks would be of value in analyzing the interview results.

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## 2. Proposed Interview Guide.

SECTION I. Purpose -- to introduce respondent to survey and to establish the rapport necessary to a productive interview. (Interviewer should in his own language outline briefly the background of the survey and the importance of the interview for obtaining the kind of information so obtained will be regarded as confidential, that any restrictions placed on background information received or personal remarks will be rigorously respected, and that no attributions to any individual will be made on any information obtained. Though this part should normally take only two or three minutes, team member should spend more time if necessary to answer any questions and obtain the full confidence of the respondent.

SECTION II. Purpose -- to obtain facts regarding respondent's receipt, reading, immediate use, referral, file and recall of NIE's. (It is just as important to establish non-use as to establish intensive use. This might well be pointed out to the respondent. Stock answers or general praise are not what we seek. Where an interviewee indicates very limited use or non-use, team member should at his discretion ask to be referred to the person in interviewee's organization who can provide the more specific use information. The following questions are listed to provide guidance in sequence and the subjects to be covered. They need not be used in the exact order nor asked in the same language).

### RECEIPT

1. Do you receive all NIE's? Selected NIE's? If selected, on what basis? Do you have standing instructions to see NIE's dealing with certain areas or problems?

2. Do you ever call for an NIE when a problem comes up on which it might be useful? For example, do you ever refer to an NIE again after its initial receipt? Are they kept on hand in your office?

### READING

1. Do you read all NIE's that you receive? If not, which (subject or area) do you usually read, not read?

2. Of those you read, do you read all or just conclusions?

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3. Did you read NIE \_\_\_\_\_ or NIE \_\_\_\_\_ (chosen on basis of pertinence to respondent's line of work). \*

USE

1. Of what practical use are NIE's to you? (Carefully note any distinctions respondent makes between kinds of NIE's when he is discussing general use). For personal background? For working on a specific problem or policy?

2. Was NIE \* \_\_\_\_\_ of use to you dealing with \_\_\_\_\_ which may have been among your responsibilities? Did you find this NIE useful in relation to a decision you had to make or a position you had to take in dealing with other officials? In regard to supplementing your own information regarding the problem addressed?

3. Do you ever forward NIE's to others in your organization for either general reading or a particular task? Do you ever ask your staff to comment on a particular NIE? Does your staff use NIE's to check or to supplement its own information and analysis?

4. Do you encounter any difficulty in applying the general judgments contained in an NIE to policy problems confronting you? In what ways? Is the estimative language sufficiently clear and precise?

5. Do NIE's contain estimative material not found in other publications which you receive?

6. Do you find the NIE's timely in relation to your problems?

7. Is the length of the NIE's usually adequate for your purposes? Are they too long or too short?

\* For purposes of comparability the NIE's specifically mentioned to the respondent should be taken from the list below. However, where these are not pertinent any appropriate NIE should be mentioned.

NIE 11-3-55, "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Soviet Courses of Action through 1960"

NIE 11-5-55, "Air Defense of the Sino-Soviet Bloc, 1955-1960"

NIE 11-6-55, "Probable Intelligence Warning of Soviet Attack on the US through Mid-1958"

NIE 100-5-55, "Implications of Growing Nuclear Capabilities for the Communist Bloc and the Free World"

NIE 30-55, "Middle East Defense Problems and Prospects"

NIE 31/1-55, "Yugoslavia and its Future Orientation"

NIE 100-4/1-55, "Morale on Taiwan"

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8. Would you prefer estimates directed toward more specific problems even at the cost of narrower application? More general NIE's?

9. Are the differences between the text and the dissents clear to you? As a consumer, do you find the dissents of value?

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TAB "C"

**PROPOSED LETTER QUERY TO OVERSEAS USERS**

1. The intelligence community is conducting a survey of the use of National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) by other echelons of the US government. Our objective is to gather data which will make it possible for the intelligence community to do a more useful job through the medium of the NIE.

2. In the case of military commands, we are primarily concerned with the use of NIE's by the planning and policy-making echelons, either directly via dissemination to them of the NIE's themselves or indirectly via briefings by their intelligence components.

3. We solicit your cooperation in answering the following list of questions:

- a. How many NIE's were received over the past year?
- b. How long did it take for the NIE's to arrive (as compared with the publication date on the NIE cover)?
- c. Did you receive enough copies for your purposes?
- d. To whom were the NIE's disseminated in your command (embassy)? Are they seen by other than intelligence personnel? Do you have a standard distribution?
- e. What use was made of the NIE's in your command (embassy)? Were they useful only for background purposes? For dealing with specific problems?
- f. Were the estimative judgements made phrased sufficiently clearly for your purposes?
- g. Did the NIE's add anything to what was already available to you from other sources?

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